



THE DRUMMER SPRAWLED INTO THE DITCH.

LIZ AND JIM-ED

By CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS

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The oxen, lean and rough-haired, one of them carrot red, the other brindled and white, were slouching feebly along the narrow backwoods road. From habit they sagged heavily on the yokes, and groaned huge windy sighs, although the vehicle they were hauling held no load. This structure, the mere skeleton of a cart, consisted of two pairs of clumsy, broad-tired wheels, united by a long tongue of ash, whose tip was tied with a rope to the middle of the forward axle. The road looked innocent of even the least of the country road-master's well-meaning attempts at repair—a circumstance, indeed, which should perhaps be set to its credit. It was made up of four deep, parallel ruts, the two outermost eroded by years of journeying cart wheels, the inner ones worn by the companioning hoofs of many a yoke of oxen. Down the center ran a high and grassy ridge, intolerable to the country parson and the country doctor, compelled to traverse this highway in their one-horse wagons. From ruts and ridges alike protruded the imperishable granite boulder, which wheels and feet might polish but never efface. On either side of the roadway was traced an erratic furrow, professing to do duty for a drain, and at intervals emptying a playful current across the track to wander down the ruts.

Along beside the slouching team slouched a tall, lank, stoop-shouldered youth, the white dust just beginning to stiffen into bristles on his long upper lip. His pale eyes and pale hair looked yet paler by contrast with his thin, red, wind-roughened face. In his hand he carried a long-handled ox-whip, with a short goad in the butt of it.

"Gee, Buck!" he drawled, prodding the near ox lightly in the ribs. And the team lurched to the right to avoid a markedly obtrusive boulder. "Haw, Bright!" he ejaculated a minute later, flicking with his whip the off shoulder of the farthest ox. And with sprawling legs and swaying of hind-quarters the team swerved obediently to the left, shunning a mire-hole that would have taken in the wheel to the hub. Presently, coming to a swampy spot that stretched all the way across the road, the youth seated himself adieu on the narrow tongue connecting the fore and hind axles, and drove his team dry-shod.

It was a slow and creaking progress; but there seemed to be no hurry, and the youth dreamed gloomily on his jolting perch. His eyes took no note of the dark-mossed scrubby hillocks, the rough clearings blackened with fire, the confused and ragged woods, as they crept past in somber procession. But suddenly as the cart rounded a turn in the road, there came into view the figure of a girl traveling in the same direction. The young man slipped from his perch and prodded up the oxen to a brisk walk.

As the noise of the team approached her, the girl looked around. She was good to see, with her straight vigorous young figure in its blue-gray homespun gown. Her hair, in color not far from that of the red ox, was rich and abundant, and lay in a coil so gracious that not even the tawdry millinery of her cheap "store" hat could make her head look quite commonplace. Her face was freckled, but wholesome and comely. A shade of displeasure passed over it as she saw who was behind her, and she hastened her steps perceptibly. But presently she remembered that she had a good five miles to go ere she would reach her destination; and she realized that she could not hope to escape by flight. With a pout of vexation she resigned herself to the inevitable, and dropped back into her former

pace. Immediately the exteam overtook her.

As the oxen slowed up she stepped to the right to let them pass, and then walked on, thus placing the cart between herself and her undesired companion. The youth looked disconcerted by these tactics, and for a few moments could find nothing to say. Then, dropping his long white lashes sheepishly, he murmured: "Good day, Liz."

"Well, Jim-Ed!" replied the girl, coolly.

"Won't ye set on an' let me give ye a lift home?" he asked, with entreaty in his voice.

"No," she said, with finality. "I'd rather walk."

Not knowing how to answer this rebuff, he tried to cover his embarrassment by exclaiming authoritatively: "Haw, Bright!" whereupon the team slowed to the left and crowded him into the ditch.

Soon he began again.

"Ye might set on, Liz," he pleaded. "Yes, I might," said she, with what she considered rather withering smartness; "but I ain't a goin' to."

"Ye'll be tired afore ye git home," he persisted, encouraged by finding that she would talk back at him.

"James-Ed A'K'ison," she declared, with emphasis, "if ye think I'm a goin' to be beholden to you fer a lift home, ye're mistaken, that's all."

After this there was silence for some time, broken only by the rattling and bumping of the cart, and once by the whirr of a woodcock that volleyed across the road. Young



She Gently Bound the Wound.

Atkinson chewed the cud of gloomy bewilderment. At length he roused himself to another effort.

"Liz," said he, plaintively, "y' ain't been like ye used to, sence ye come back from the States."

"Ain't I?" she remarked, indifferently.

"No, Liz, ye ain't," he repeated, with a sort of pathetic emphasis, as if eager to persuade himself that she had condescended to rebut his accusation. "Y' ain't been like ye used to at all. Appears like as if ye thought us folks in the settlement wasn't good enough fer ye now."

At this the girl tossed her head crossly.

"It appears like as if ye wanted to be back in the States ag'in," he continued, in a voice of anxious interrogation.

"My lands," exclaimed the girl, "but ye're green!"

To the young man this seemed such an irrelevant remark that he was silent for some time, striving to fathom its significance. As his head sank lower and lower, and he seemed to lose himself completely in joyless

revery, the girl shot occasional glances at him out of the corners of her eyes. She had spent the preceding winter in a factory in a crude but stirring little New England town, and had come back to Nova Scotia ill content with the monotony of life in the backwoods seclusion of Wyer's Settlement. Before she went away she had been, to use the vernacular of the settlement, "keepin' company" with Jim-Ed A'K'ison; and now, to her, the young man seemed to unite and concentrate in his person all that she had been wont to persuade herself she had outgrown. To be sure, she not seldom caught herself back comfortably into the old conditions. But these symptoms stirred in her heart an uneasy resentment, akin to that she felt whenever—as would happen at times—she could not help recognizing that Jim-Ed and his affairs were not without a passing interest in her eyes.

Now she began to grow particularly angry at him because, as she thought, "he hadn't nothing to say ter himself." Sadly to his disadvantage, she compared his simplicity and honest diffidence with the bold selfassertion and easy familiarity of the young fellows with whom she had come in contact during the winter. Their impertinences had offended her grievously at the time, but, womanlike, she permitted herself to forget that now, in order to accentuate the deficiencies of the man whom she was unwilling to think well of.

"My lands!" she reiterated to herself, with accumulated scorn, "but ain't he green? He—why, he wouldn't know a 'lectric car from a waterin'-cart. An' s'f, too, takin' all my sac's 'bout givin' me no lip back, no more'n if I was his mother!"

But the young man presently broke in upon these unflattering reflections. With a sigh he said slowly, as if half to himself:

"Lands, but I used to set a powerful store by ye, Liz!"

He paused; and at that "used to" the girl opened her eyes with angry apprehension. But he went on:

"An' I set still more store by ye now, Liz, senceways. Seem like I jest couldn't live without ye. I always did feel as how ye was too good, a sight too good, fer me, an' ye so smart; an' now I feel it morn' over, bein' 'g ye've seen so much of the world like. But, Liz, I don't allow as it's right an' proper fer even ye to look down the way ye do on the place ye was born in an' the folks ye was brung up with."

"My!" thought the girl to herself, "he's got some spunk, after all, to git off such a speech as that, an' to rake me over the coals, too!"

But aloud she retorted: "Who's a lookin' down on anybody, Jim-Ed A'K'ison? An' anyways, you ain't the whole of Wyer's Settlement, be ye?"

The justice of this retort seemed to strike the young man with great force.

"That's so," he acknowledged, gloomily. "Course I ain't. An' I s'pose I hadn't oughter said what I did."

Then he relapsed into silence. For half a mile he slouched on without a syllable, save an occasional word of command addressed to the team. Coming to another boggy bit of road he seated himself dejectedly on the cart, and apparently would not presume to again press unwelcome assistance upon his fellow wayfarer. Quite uncertain whether to interpret this action as excess of humility or as a severe rebuke, the girl picked her way as best she could, flushed with a sense of injury.

When the mud was passed, the young man absent-mindedly kept his seat. Beginning to boil with indignation, the girl speedily lost her confident superiority, and felt humiliated. She did not know what to do. She could not continue to walk humbly beside the cart. The situation was profoundly altered by the fact that the young man was riding. She tried to drop behind; but the team had an infinite capacity for loitering. At last, with head high in the air, she darted ahead of the team and walked as fast as she could. Although she heard no orders given by their driver, she knew at once that the oxen had quickened their pace, and that she was not leaving them behind.

Presently she found herself overtaken; whereupon, with swelling heart and face averted, she dropped again to the rear. She was drawing portentously near the verge of that feminine cataclysm, tears, when Fate stepped in to save her from such a mortification.

Fate goes about in many merry disguises. At this juncture she presented herself under the aspect of two half-tipsy commercial travelers driving a single horse in a light open trap. They were driving in from the settlement, in haste to reach the hotel at Bolton Corners before night-fall. The youth hawed his team vigorously till the high wheels were on the other side of the ditch, leaving a liberal share of the road for them to pass in.

But the drummers were not satisfied with this. After a glance at the bashful face and dejected attitude of the young man on the ox-cart, they decided that they wanted the whole road. When their horse's head almost touched the horns of the off ox, they stopped.

"Get out of the way, there!" cried the man who held the reins, insolently.

At any other time Jim-Ed would have resented the town man's tone and words; just now he was thinking about the way Liz had changed.

"I've g'n ye the best half of the road, mister," he said, deprecatingly. "'n' I can't do no better fer ye than that."

"Yes, you can, too," shouted the driver of the trap; "you can give us the whole road. It won't hurt your old cart to go out in the stumps, but we ain't going to drive in the ditch, not by a jugful. Get over, I tell you, and be quick about it."

To this the youth made no immediate reply; but he began to forget about the girl, and to feel himself growing hot. As for the girl, she had stepped to the front, resolved to "show off" and to make very manifest to the city men her scorn for her companion. Her cheeks and eye were flaming, and the drummers were not slow to respond to the challenge which she flashed at them from under her drooped lids.

"Ah, there, my beauty!" said the driver, his attention for a moment diverted from the question of right of way. His companion, a smallish man in striped trousers and fawn-colored overcoat, sprang lightly out of the trap, with the double purpose of clearing the road and amusing himself with Liz. The saucy smile with which she met him turned into a frown, however, as he began brutally kicking the knees of the oxen to make them stand over.

The patient brutes crowded into the ditch.

"Whoa, there! Gee, Buck! gee, Bright!" ordered the youth, and the team lurched back into the road. At the same time he stepped over the cart beam and came forward on the off side of the team.

"Ye'd better quit that, mister!" he exclaimed, with a threatening note in his voice.

"Give the lout a slap in the mouth, and make him get out of the way," cried the man in the trap.

But the man in the fawn-colored coat was busy. Liz was much to his taste.

"Jump in and take a ride with us, my pretty," said he.

But Liz shrank away, regretting her provocative glances now that she saw the kind of men she had to do with.

"Come, come," coaxed the man, "don't be shy, my blooming daisy. We'll drive you right in to the Corners and set up a good time for you."

And, grasping her hand, he slipped an arm about her waist and tried to kiss her lips. As she tore herself fiercely away, she heard the man in the



James-Ed A'K'ison, If Ye Think I'm A'goin' to Be Beholden to You Ye're Mistaken.

trap laugh loud approval. She struck at her insulter with clenched hand; but she did not touch him, for just then something happened to him. The long arm of the youth went out like a cannon-ball, and the drummer sprawled in the ditch. He nimbly picked himself up and darted upon his assailant, while the man in the trap shouted to him encouragingly—

"Give it to him pretty, Mike!"

But the young countryman caught him by the neck with long, vise-like fingers, inexorable, and, holding him thus helpless at arm's length, struck him again heavily in the ribs, and hurled him over the ditch into a blueberry thicket, where he remained in dazed discretion.

Though of a lamb-like gentleness on ordinary occasions, the young countryman was renowned throughout the settlement for the astonishing strength that lurked in his lean frame. At this moment he was well aroused, and Liz found herself watching him with a consuming admiration. He no longer slouched, and his pale eyes, like polished steel, shot a menacing gleam. He stepped forward and took the horse by the bridle.

"Now," said he to the driver, "I've g'n ye half the road, an' if ye can't drive by in that I'm a goin' to lead ye by, 'thout no more nonsense."

"Let go that bridle!" yelled the driver, standing up and lashing at him with the whip.

One stroke caught the young man down the side of the face, and stung. It was a rash stroke.

"Hold the horse's head, Liz," he cried; and leaping forward, he reached into the trap for his adversary. Heeding not at all the butt end of the whip which was brought down furiously upon his head, he wrenched the driver ignominiously from his seat, spun him around, shook him as if he had been a rag baby, and hurled him violently against a rotten stump on the other side of the ditch. The stump gave way, and the drummer splashed into a bog hole.

Nothing cowed a man more quickly than a shaking combined with a ducking. Without a word the drummer hauled himself out of the bog and walked sullenly forward. His companion joined him; and Liz, leading the horse and trap carefully past the cart, delivered them up to their owners with a sarcastic smile on her lips. Then she resumed her place beside the cart, the young man flicked the

oxen gently, and the team once more got slowly under way.

As the discomfited drummers climbed into their trap, the girl, in the ardor of her suddenly adopted hero-worship, could not refrain from turning around again to triumph over them. When the men were fairly seated, and the reins gathered up for prompt departure, the smaller man turned suddenly and threw a large stone with vindictive energy and deadly aim.

"Look out!" shrieked the girl; and the young countryman turned aside just in time to escape the full force of the missile. It grazed the side of his head, however, with such violence as to bring him to his knees, and the blood spread throbbing out of the long cut like a scarlet veil. The drummers whipped their horse to a gallop, and disappeared.

The girl first stopped the team, with a true country-side instinct; and she was at the young man's side, sobbing with anxious fear, just as he staggered blindly to his feet. Seating him on the cart, she proceeded to staunch the bleeding with the edge of her gown. Observing this, he protested, and declared that the cut was nothing. But she would not be gainsaid, and he yielded, apparently well content under her hands. Then, tearing a strip from her colored cotton petticoat, she gently bound up the wound, not artistically, perhaps, but in every way to his satisfaction.

"If ye hadn't g'n me warnin', Liz, that there stun'd about fixed me," he remarked.

The girl smiled happily, but said nothing.

After a long pause he spoke again. "Seems to me ye're like what ye used to, Liz," said he, "only nicer, a sight nicer; an' y' used to be powerful nice. I allow there couldn't be another girl so nice as you, Liz. An' what ever's made ye quit lookin' down on me, so sudden like?"

"Jim-Ed," she replied in a caressing tone, "of y' ain't got no paper collar on, ner no glas' d'mon' pin, I allow ye're a man. An' maybe—maybe ye're the kind of man I like, Jim-Ed."

To even such genuine modesty as Jim-Ed's this was comprehensible. Shyly and happily he reached out his hand for hers. They were both seated very comfortably on the cart-beam, so he did not consider it necessary to move. Side by side, and hand in hand, they journeyed homeward in a glorious silence. The oxen appeared to guide themselves very fairly. The sunset flushed strangely the roadside hillocks. The night-birds swooped in the pale zenith with the twang of snitten chords. And from a thick maple on the edge of a clearing a hermit-thrush fluted slowly over and over his eloquent ecstasy.

RICH CARGOES OF OLD.

Spanish Galleons Laden with Riches Sports for the Buccaneers.

The galleons (the name is a corruption of galley and is from the Greek, but the origin is lost) were variously designated, says a writer in Scribner's. There were "register ships," privileged merchantmen, so called from being registered at Cadiz; "avisoes," dispatch and mail ships with regular monthly sailing between ports, which seldom carried treasure, but were eagerly sought for by the information in their mail bags of galley movements; the "azogues" were the quicksilver ships that carried from Spain the mercury necessary for smelting and refining in the mines of Mexico and Peru; the "flota" was the fleet which sailed from Cadiz to Cartagena, in what is now Colombia; and the Spaniards called all ships "galleons" which sailed annually to Vera Cruz in Mexico. The English called them variously "treasure ships" and "plate fleets" from the fact that much of the treasure carried was in the form of rough metal plate and pig.

A comparison of the value of the cargoes carried by the flota and galleons is interesting. Of gold, to the 3,000,000 crowns carried by the galleons, the flota carried but 1,000,000; of silver, the galleons carried 20,000 crowns, the flota 10,000; of jewels, so called, the galleons carried usually about 20,000 crowns' worth of pearls, 200,000 crowns' worth of emeralds, 20,000 or 30,000 crowns' worth of amethysts and other less valuable stones (these figures include, however, the East Indian ships), the flota carried none; of wools, the galleons' cargoes approximated 40,000 or 50,000 crowns' worth, the flota none; of quinquina, the galleons 20,000 or 30,000 crowns' worth; the flota none; of Campeachy woods the galleons 60,000 crowns' worth, the flota none; and of skins and leather the galleons about 70,000 crowns' worth and the flota a like quantity. The register ships from Buenos Ayres usually carried a cargo of skins and leather valued at 200,000 crowns and 600,000 crowns' worth of indigo. This difference in value did not last for long after the treasure ships began to be the prey of all mankind, then the cargoes were shipped indiscriminately provided only the vessels were strong and fast or in large fleets.

Truth.

Men differ, and will always differ, as to what truth is in this or in that matter, but that man finds truth who seeks it; he serves truth who follows it fearlessly; he serves his fellow men who does all this with humility and with tolerance.—Henry S. Pritchett.

Costly City Government.

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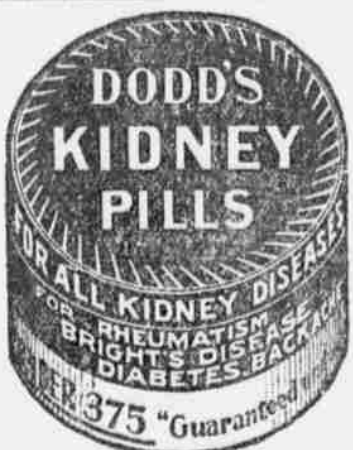
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